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Czech Coup Tests U.S. "Containment" Policy

While future disclosures of the events that took place in Prague during the fateful days beginning February 20 may alter the picture now available, it is believed by Czechs abroad that the decision of President Eduard Benes and Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk was determined by fear both of Russian military pressure and of civil war. Throughout the crisis, Valerian A. Zorin, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, and several Russian generals were in Prague, leaving for Moscow only on February 28. In his letter of February 25 to Premier Klement Gottwald, Benes, after reaffirming his faith in democracy, clearly stated that he had consented to the change in government because of his desire to avoid civil strife. In an interview on February 29 Masaryk said: "There were some people who thought it was possible to govern here without the Communists or against the Communists. This was the cause of the crisis." But, whatever their motives, the President and the Foreign Minister of the Czechoslovak Republic, by remaining at their posts, have given the new government the aspect of legality, and have thus made it extremely difficult for either Czech opposition elements at home and abroad, or for foreign governments, to intervene in the situation.

Significant, too, is the fact that the Social Democrats, who were expected to spearhead opposition to the Communists, had been deeply split last November, when Zdenek Fierlinger, long a protege of Benes, who had advocated close cooperation with the Communists, was succeeded as party chief by the reportedly more moderate Bohumil Lausman. With-

out any visible show of resistance, however, both Social Democratic leaders entered the new cabinet, Lausman as Deputy Premier, and Fierlinger in the key post of Minister of Industry.

Communist Decline

In contrast to other countries of Eastern Europe and the Balkans, where a low standard of living fostered unrest, Czechoslovakia, one of the leading industrial nations on the continent, was remarkably free from economic and social maladjustments except such as were brought about by the war. Why, then, did the Communists win 38 per cent of the votes in the 1946 elections—the highest vote registered in any country outside the U.S.S.R.? For this there were several reasons which also played an important part in the current crisis. Among them were fear of Germany's resurgence; bitter memories of the indifference of the Western powers toward the fate of Czechoslovakia at Munich; and a profound conviction on the part of all groups, including the Rightists and the Catholics, that, irrespective of any predilection on the part of the Czechs, geography made it necessary for the country to maintain the best possible relations with Russia.

At the same time, it is the consensus of Czech and foreign observers that the Communists were beginning to lose ground. With elections scheduled this spring, the Communists apparently decided to take no chance of suffering a loss at the polls, or even merely of holding their own. The internal situation was greatly aggravated by rising tension between the

United States and Russia. The Marshall plan offered strong temptation to those Czechs who hoped to restore close ties with the Western nations. By the same token, every statement from the United States expressing hope that the Czechs would emerge from behind the "iron curtain" and turn their backs on Russia strengthened Moscow's fear that Czechoslovakia would go over to the side of the Western powers. This, it was believed, would deprive Russia of an increasingly important source of industrial goods at the very time when Washington was adamant in its decision that Russia should receive no reparations in the form of capital equipment from Western Germany, and was discussing plans to rebuild the Ruhr under the ERP.

Effect on U.S. Policy

During the past year the Washington administration has been basing its policy toward Russia primarily on the Truman Doctrine and on the theory of "containment." Whether or not State Department planners had envisaged the possibility that the Russians, instead, might strike out at points where the United States could not effectively oppose them, is not clear. In any case the Czechoslovak crisis has posed a grave dilemma for the United States. For in supporting parliamentary democracy, can we logically continue to oppose participation by Communists in elected governments? If we encourage Western nations to exclude them, the risk is either seizure of power by the Communists, as in Prague, or establishment of Rightist dictatorships. In either case, civil

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war would be in prospect, with disastrous results for European stability and the Marshall plan.

The other possible alternative, which since the end of the war seemed the only course offering any hope to the United States—support of socialism—may prove

far less feasible than even a month or so ago. This is due to the ineluctable fact that the American people, because of devotion to the concept of free private enterprise, find it extraordinarily difficult to give socialism in Europe the genuine and continued aid it would need to stand up

to the convictions and discipline of the Communists. Nor has the British Labor government, itself increasingly dependent on American economic aid, offered the Socialist parties of Europe the dynamic leadership urgently required in our times.

VERA MICHELES DEAN

New African Opportunities Attract Western Capital

In his notable January 22 speech on British foreign policy, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin stressed the importance of finding colonial economic support for his proposed Western European Union. "In the first place," he said, "we turn our eyes to Africa." We need "the closest possible collaboration with the Commonwealth and overseas territories, not only British, but French, Dutch, Belgian and Portuguese."

Economic development and military strategy are closely linked in Western plans for Africa because military bases require industrial support. Moreover, Africa is a major source of uranium ore. The United States receives the uranium output of the closely guarded Belgian Congo mine at Shinkolobwe, one of the world's richest deposits. In the Union of South Africa, Minister of Mines Jan H. Hofmeyer told the House of Assembly on February 10 that uranium is found in at least three of the Union's four provinces and also in Southwest Africa.

Is Africa Rich?

A word of caution is necessary, however, in order to correct the current tendency to exaggerate the wealth of Africa. Although the second largest continent occupies 20 per cent of the world's area, it has only 7.5 per cent of the population, 3 per cent of the agricultural products, 9 per cent of the metals, 5 per cent of the railroads, and 5 per cent of the trade. Contrary to a widespread impression, much of Africa's soil, even in areas of tropical forest, is relatively poor.

Despite these limitations, Africa is so underdeveloped that it does have abundant economic possibilities. A good example of what can be accomplished by the systematic exploration of these possibilities is the work of the economic mission attached to the American Legation in Monrovia, Liberia. Technicians on the staff of this mission have pointed out opportunities for the profitable production of half a dozen minerals and a dozen agricultural commodities—in a backward

country where rubber is now the only significant commercial crop.

Production Possibilities

World food shortages, aggravated by bad weather in recent years, have stimulated interest in developing African production of food, particularly vegetable oils and oil seeds. The most publicized venture of this type is the British East African scheme to plant 3,250,000 acres of groundnuts (peanuts), which is the biggest government farming experiment outside Russia. This plan alone is capable of reducing Britain's shortage of fats by at least one-third before the end of the European Recovery Program. According to a February 3 report from Tanganyika, however, progress has been disappointingly slow. Falling far short of the first year's goal of 150,000 acres, workers have planted only 7,500 acres and cleared the bush from another 7,000. Moreover, it is now apparent that the scheme will cost considerably more than the \$100 million originally contemplated.

Palm products (palm oil and palm kernels) and cocoa beans are Africa's two other leading agricultural exports. According to the International Emergency Food Council, the world demand for cocoa beans in 1947-48 will be about 800,000 long tons, but the supply will be less than 600,000. Although British West Africa produces half the world total, the cocoa trees of the Gold Coast, Africa's richest colony, are dying from a disease called swollen shoot, which is spreading at the rate of 15 million trees a year. The Liberia Company—organized by the American firm, Stettinius Associates—is pushing cocoa production, and hopes to produce 50,000 tons annually in ten years.

While gold and diamonds are the best known minerals of Africa, the continent also has important deposits of copper, tin, manganese, bauxite, cobalt, vanadium, chromite, coal and iron. A concession to exploit iron ore in the Bomi hill area of Liberia has been granted by the Liberian government to Lansdell K. Christie of

New York. The Amalgamated Tin Mines of Nigeria, whose surface reserves are nearing exhaustion, has sunk its first 200 foot shaft to begin the underground mining of tin. In the Union of South Africa coal production has reached 25 million tons a year, in contrast to the pre-war figure of 18 million, and it may reach 31 million tons by 1949. In water power, Africa has the greatest potentialities of any continent, possessing about 40 per cent of the world's estimated 500 million horsepower. Although less than 1 per cent of these power resources is now utilized, important dams are planned in several regions. Railroad construction is under discussion in Liberia, Tanganyika, Southern Rhodesia, Southwest Africa and elsewhere.

Ten-Year Plans

About \$220 million furnished by taxpayers in the United Kingdom is scheduled to go into African social welfare and economic development projects by 1956. This sum will be supplemented by loans and local colonial revenues which will make the total figure much higher. Nigeria, Britain's largest remaining colony in area and population, will itself spend more than \$200 million. France's plans for the African territories of the French Union (excluding French North Africa) called for the expenditure of 9.95 billion metropolitan francs in 1947. A five-year plan for French North Africa adopted in 1946 provisionally estimated the reconstruction and development requirements of the area at 244 billion metropolitan francs. A welfare fund of 2.35 billion francs was set up for the Belgian Congo and the Belgian trust territory of Ruanda-Urundi in 1947.

Private capital in Socialist countries of Europe is finding a profitable outlet in Africa. American investors now have an estimated \$100 million in the Union of South Africa. Last year, 3,721 new companies with a total capitalization of nearly \$400 million are reported to have been formed in South Africa.

VERNON MCKAY

(The second of three articles on the strategic and economic importance of Africa.)

Will U. S. Back Western Union?

News in the Making

WASHINGTON—The intimate advisory relations which the United States has openly established during the past year with the governments of Italy, Greece, and Turkey have wiped out, for practical purposes, the tradition of American nonintervention in European political affairs in times of peace. Foreign policy officials in Washington are now considering whether it would serve our interests to carry that tendency forward by establishing an American alliance, formal or informal, with the principal nations of Western Europe.

Communist seizure of the government in Czechoslovakia and Moscow's proposal that Finland sign a defense treaty with the Soviet Union have sharpened the interest of the State Department in a formal trans-Atlantic political understanding. By implying an increase in Soviet power, the change of government in Prague constitutes a setback for the American policy of "containment" which aims at weakening Russia. The intention of the Administration is to offset such developments by counter moves. If the Czechoslovak events do not promote the birth of a Western concert of powers, they may at least induce the United States to furnish some Western European countries with military supplies as well as with the peacetime materials they are to receive under the Marshall plan.

American-European Concert

The foundations for such a trans-Atlantic concert exist in the program of European-American economic collaboration envisaged in the Marshall plan and in the vague project for a Western European Union which British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin announced on January 22.* But contemplation of such a concert represents a distinct departure from proposals that the United States has seriously entertained in the past.

When Secretary of State George C. Marshall presented the germ of the European Recovery Program on June 5, 1947, the Administration was confident

that economic improvement on the continent would be sufficient to check the Communists. At about the same time Senator Fulbright, Democrat, of Arkansas, sponsored a resolution in Congress advocating that the European nations form a United States of their own. But the idea that America might link itself directly with some form of limited European union has rapidly gained ground since the collapse of the London meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, which sought in vain last November to arrive at a German settlement. The belief is now growing in Washington that the United States might supplement economic assistance by a program of political cooperation with those Marshall plan countries which hold the keys to our strategic security in the Atlantic area. In a demonstration of multinational combined interest, the United States, Britain, and France on February 26 jointly condemned the new government of Premier Klement Gottwald.

The Dutch Minister, Baron van Boetzelaer van Oosterhout, encouraged this trend in American official thinking on February 24 when he told the Netherlands parliament that a way should be sought to bring about the union proposed by Bevin. Van Boetzelaer also stressed the need to include Western Germany in such a concert with the countries Bevin had already mentioned—France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom.

Washington's immediate political concern in Europe is to forestall Communist seizure of the governments of France and Italy. America is able currently to give the appearance of military support to France and Italy by naval maneuvers in the Mediterranean. Washington also has a limited military understanding with Portugal, which on February 14 leased to the United States the strategic airfield of Lagens in the Azores. Eventual inclusion of Spain in America's European system is not beyond possibility.

Obstacles to New Policy

Many members of Congress, however, cannot be persuaded to abandon their con-

Reports of plans for an *Eastern European federation* indicate differences of opinion among Russia's neighbors. Dispatches from Warsaw and Prague indicate that the industrial nations of the area are cool to the project, chief champion of which is Premier Georgi Dimitrov of Bulgaria. . . . Watch for final action by the *international wheat conference* now in progress at State Department. Prospects are good for world agreement on minimum wheat price without Argentine participation. . . . The *Franco government* expects Spain will get into the ERP before long. A U.S. Congressional committee which visited Spain last summer reported that, "with all the faults of Franco's Spain," it is a principal bastion against the totalitarianism of the left." Washington is leaving the decision to the 16 Marshall plan nations. . . . *American businessmen in Shanghai* are showing interest in economic prospects on the island of Formosa. U.S. military men for some time have been helping to train Nanking troops there. . . . *Communist seizure of power in Czechoslovakia* will be taken into account by the International Bank in passing on Prague's application for a \$350 million credit. Poland's request for a \$600 million credit is receiving serious study because of Europe's urgent need for Polish coal.

viction that the United States should rely almost exclusively on Germany as its shield in Europe. The governments of Western Europe, especially France, still fear that the United States, by encouraging the economic restoration of Germany under German management, endangers Europe while it endeavors to protect it from the Soviet Union. The Scandinavian countries, for their part, have been reluctant to join any union on which Russia frowns. Other Marshall plan countries are by no means ready to adopt openly an anti-Russian stand, and some of them, notably Britain and Belgium which have recently concluded trade agreements with Moscow, hope to benefit by Russian trade.

BLAIR BOLLES

*See *Foreign Policy Bulletin*, January 30, 1948.

• FPA NEWS •

Student Affairs

The Philadelphia association is active in sponsoring meetings on the campus of nearby colleges, taking the FPA to the college students who are unable to go to the FPA.

For the annual conference of colleges in the New York area, the subject "Misunderstandings in the Non-Russia World" has been chosen. Meetings will be held at International House on April 16, and representatives from 50 colleges have been invited.

FPA will cooperate with the International Relations Clubs in their first National College Conference which will be held in St. Louis, April 9-10.

Cleveland Council on World Affairs has arranged for sixteen students who are Junior Council members to go to New York where they will visit the UN and attend the *New York Herald Tribune* Junior Forum. The Council and the schools are jointly financing the project. These young people will participate in the city-wide mock UN meetings to be held on March 13 in Cleveland.

New York Luncheon

"India Without Gandhi" is the subject of the New York FPA luncheon at the Waldorf-Astoria, Saturday, March 13 at 12:45. Speakers: Phillips Talbot and Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar. This is the last of the regular FPA luncheons this season.

National Dates

April 2-3—Meeting of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Philadelphia, Pa.

April 9-10—First National College Conference, International Relations Clubs, St. Louis, Mo.

April 13-14—A two-day Council of Branches meeting in New Orleans.

April 14-17—The New Orleans-Time Forum, "The Future of Freedom—A Report from the World."

Association Meetings

Oklahoma City	March 8	France between the USA and the USSR	Prof. George Connes
Worcester	10	France	André Morize
Elmira	11	How to Win the Peace	Dr. C. J. Hambro
Shreveport	12	Britain's Contribution to World Recovery	Harry Wright Wallace
Bethlehem	13	Problems of the Pacific Area	Dr. V. K. Wellington Koo
Boston	13	America as a Super Power	Brooks Emeny
New York	13	India Without Gandhi	Phillips Talbot Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar
Philadelphia	13	Lifting the Iron Curtain	Harlow Shapley James Burnham
Austin	15	Britain's Contribution to World Recovery	Harry Wright Wallace
Oklahoma City	16	Britain's Industrial Reconstruction	Harry Wright Wallace
Tulsa	18	Britain's Contribution to World Recovery	Harry Wright Wallace

List compiled from information available at National Headquarters on February 27.

Special Community Programs

Newspaper Cable and Telegraph Editors from Los Angeles to Worcester attended an all day seminar on ERP arranged for them at National Headquarters. These newspaper men were in New York for three weeks of intensive work at the American Press Institute.

Oklahoma City reports that the FPA is busy helping to provide speakers on subjects of international interest for organizations both in the city and outside.

Philadelphia, in cooperation with station WIP, has inaugurated a weekly Sunday afternoon radio program. The first broadcast was on the subject of India.

Albany has taken the lead in training background speakers on ERP as a service to the community.

Worcester meetings are supported by the local paper in a most useful manner. The publisher takes a table for each meeting and makes attendance on the part of editors and reporters compulsory.

Some associations give receipts to non-members when admissions are paid to meetings. These receipts may be presented as cash credits toward an FPA membership.

Available Now

FORGING A NEW CHINA is the subject of a new Discussion Packet. The new expanded packet can be secured at FPA National Headquarters for \$1.00 each. Special rates for quantity orders.

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